

# Forging an Indian Partnership

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In 2009 a new capability was introduced to the world as it rolled past a reviewing stand in China and onto newspaper and Internet opinion pages across the globe. Rumors over the capabilities and consequences of the Dongfeng 21D antiship ballistic missile raised questions over how the United States would respond to a country developing missiles with only one purpose—to deter or destroy US carriers at sea, far beyond their ability to strike back.

Many observers have noted with concern China's meteoric rise in both national GDP and expenditure on military equipment. Although the true amount spent on its military activity is shrouded in secrecy, the Chinese government's official figures have shown an average annual growth of 12.9 percent since 1989.<sup>1</sup> While the United States still spends more than China in both absolute terms and as a percentage of GDP (\$698 billion vs. \$119 billion and 4.8 percent vs. 2.1 percent, respectively),<sup>2</sup> these substantial growth trends, coupled with a lack of transparency over Chinese intentions, have caused alarm among some defense observers and neighboring countries. Despite China's open denial of any hegemonic aspirations and its attempt to assuage foreign concerns about the nature of its "peaceful development,"<sup>3</sup> many commentators have called for a strategy to not only engage with this proponent of a "harmonious society," but also to hedge or possibly balance its ambitions and capabilities. To these observers, India represents that potential counterweight and balancing force. Indeed, the latest US defense strategy released in January 2012 specifically mentions the long-term strategic partnership with India.<sup>4</sup>

Thanks to its surging economy, India is embarking on a robust military modernization program. It has purchased advanced equipment from numerous countries abroad while simultaneously trying to enlarge its domestic defense industry. India is currently the top importer of military

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<b>Report Documentation Page</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
<p>Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.</p>				
1. REPORT DATE <b>2012</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2012 to 00-00-2012</b>		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Forging an Indian Partnership</b>		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
		5b. GRANT NUMBER		
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S)		5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
		5e. TASK NUMBER		
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>Air University, Strategic Studies Quarterly, 155 N. Twining Street, Maxwell AFB , AL, 36112</b>		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>				
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
14. ABSTRACT				
15. SUBJECT TERMS				
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>33</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>		

weapons and equipment in the world,<sup>5</sup> spending approximately \$41.3 billion, or 2.7 percent of GDP, in 2010,<sup>6</sup> and is expected to spend approximately \$100 billion over the next decade on upgrades to its military fleet.<sup>7</sup> This hardware expansion has included C-17, P-8,<sup>8</sup> and Su-30MKI aircraft, T-90 tanks,<sup>9</sup> advanced communication systems, air and naval surveillance systems,<sup>10</sup> and warships, to include two Russian-built aircraft carriers by 2015.<sup>11</sup>

Positioned astride the center of the increasingly important Indian Ocean region, the world's largest democracy is experiencing its own revolutionary expansion. Following independence in 1947, India initially pursued a centrally planned economic system as a means to promote its industrial sector while balancing social justice concerns. These objectives and their accompanying protectionism led to decreased trade with foreign nations and heavy reliance on Soviet technical assistance, ultimately culminating in India's balance of payments crisis in 1990–91. In response, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and the ruling Congress Party enacted a series of dramatic reforms to transform India's economy into a globally integrated market, achieving undeniable year-on-year successes.<sup>12</sup> This rapid growth is most recently exemplified by a 10.4-percent growth rate in 2010, even outstripping China's increase of 10.3 percent.<sup>13</sup> This growth shows an India that recognizes the threats and opportunities in its own future and understands that an economic giant can only become a great power if it plays an active role in international affairs and has a military that complements its economic strength.

Although India is challenged by its poor infrastructure and significant poverty, it has the advantage of a vast supply of young workers, and its growth is largely market driven as opposed to state managed, as in China. Analysts at Morgan Stanley predict India's growth rate (though not absolute size) will exceed China's within 3–5 years as well as continue to grow faster than any other large country through the next 25 years.<sup>14</sup> This economic optimism dulled in 2011 with the slowdown of India's economy; however, this phenomenon was not unique to India and may be part of a broader macroeconomic correction independent of specific Indian policies. Indeed, China itself is experiencing a similar slowdown. India's current challenges to curb high inflation, improve its substandard infrastructure, manage the declining value of the rupee (which conversely may have had the positive outcome of helping Indian exports grow by over 30 percent), and limit corruption may hamper the short- to medium-run potential of the Indian

economy if serious efforts are not made to confront these issues.<sup>15</sup> This is not to discount India's progress or potential but to encourage a more balanced appraisal of the challenges it will face economically and domestically as the United States seeks closer relations.

What will the future hold in an Asia characterized by China's seemingly endless growth and fears of waning American power? As the Obama administration refocuses its diplomatic and military efforts on its "pivot" toward Asia, the United States needs a revitalized strategy to adjust to the shifting global balance of power and to partner with nations to secure a peaceful and prosperous region. Can the United States rely on India to become a partner with its own promising growth and expansion, and what policies are necessary to promote this relationship?

## **Growing and Waning Power**

As we look to the future Asian power dynamic, it is necessary to understand how power is measured if a regional balance of power is the ultimate objective. Although subject to intense debate, it is instructive to analyze a set of measurable conditions that may form a concept of power sufficient for this analysis. Notions of soft power<sup>16</sup> are difficult to project, but the most historically accurate methods of determining power among states involve economic strength, military might, and population size. In the absence of sizeable modern militaries, economic indicators are our best method of determining power, since economic strength can be translated into military power (evidenced by the billions of dollars spent by India and China to make such a conversion). Therefore, the use of projected economic growth rate and expected rates of expenditure on military equipment can project a reliable path of great-power growth in Asia. Population size also has historically indicated power potential, since a nation can muster human resources for industrial production or to bolster military forces. Here, India has an advantage over China, since its population is not hampered by the demographic challenges of a relatively smaller proportion of younger citizens (those of military age or economic viability) in the coming decades. *The Economist* asserts that in China, "The share of people over 60 will increase from 12.5 percent in 2010 to 20 percent in 2020 [and] by 2030 their number will double from today's 178m."<sup>17</sup> Obviously an analysis based on economic trajectory can be upset by dramatic slowdowns in a nation's domestic industry and growth,<sup>18</sup> but in preparing

for the future we must calculate our requirements based on perceived adverse scenarios, not optimistic wishes.

Using this understanding we can project China-US-India relative power relationships in the coming decades. The overall trend is a game of catch-up, where the Indian and Chinese economies (and therefore their absolute power) grow at a faster rate than the United States', although not at the same pace or from the same starting point. Despite predictions that India will grow faster than China for the next couple decades, Indian economic challenges place it far behind China on an absolute basis, as its economic reforms happened much later (1991) than the transformation of China under Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s and '80s. Therefore, we can predict a time where China is approaching parity with the United States while India is still lagging behind but closing the gap. The date when the Chinese economy finally overtakes the United States' is a matter of dispute, but recent IMF figures point to 2016 as the critical year, using purchasing power parity (PPP) as opposed to absolute GDP size.<sup>19</sup> *The Economist* projects that this date will be 2018 using market exchange rates; so, although there is some room for disagreement, most analysts support this transition in the coming decade.<sup>20</sup>

Despite these projections, the specific point where the Chinese economy overtakes the US economy will largely be a symbolic moment. The United States will still retain the most powerful military force in the world and a dominant position in world affairs (as well as a much richer society measured in GDP per capita), but the overall picture is clear: the future of Asia will be characterized not by one hegemonic power exercising its will, but rather by a multitude of large states interacting in an environment of overlapping interests.

## **Indian Motivations for a US Partnership**

Understanding the likely trajectory of power growth in Asia, why should India seek to partner with the United States to check Chinese ambitions? As the dominant world power, it is easy to see why the United States would seek to resist Chinese attempts to supplant its leadership, but does India have an incentive to promote a US-led order as opposed to one that is Chinese led? Both India and China have benefited tremendously from globalization and the current state of international affairs. The flow of goods and money across borders, supported by a state system anchored

on strong behavioral norms and an international security structure that promotes access to trade, has encouraged the growth and modernity of both societies. So, it is difficult to see how either country would jeopardize the very conditions that have led to its growth. It is likely a rising China would not seek to undermine this world order (in fact, many of its claims of sovereignty and noninterference are justified on the basis of this structure), but rather it would make changes on the margin to exert its influence and secure materials and territory to further its growth. However, even marginal changes could pose threats to Indian interests. This would likely involve competition for scarce resources and access to commercial shipping lanes or merely Chinese involvement with many of the neighbors with whom India has rocky relations or finds problematic.

This permeation of Chinese influence in the region has impacted numerous countries around India's periphery. Chinese ties with Pakistan amount to approximately \$7 billion in yearly trade as well as significant military support, including civil nuclear power and nuclear weapons programs, assistance with short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, and jointly produced aircraft such as the JF-17 and K-8.<sup>21</sup> In Myanmar, China has maintained a close relationship with the military regime to ensure influence along Myanmar's long coastline. During the 1990s, both countries drew closer as a result of not only Chinese calculation but also mutual support over international backlash regarding each country's domestic repression. During this time, China supplied Myanmar with roughly \$1.2 billion in arms and has continued to jointly develop and operate radar and surveillance systems that point far into the Bay of Bengal.<sup>22</sup> In Nepal, China has adopted an aggressive charm offensive through its investment in and construction of numerous roads, factories, power plants, and sports complexes as well as educational exchanges and increased trade between the two nations.<sup>23</sup> China's "string of pearls"<sup>24</sup> strategy also requires good relations with Sri Lanka. This has generated Chinese sales of tanks, APCs, and artillery as well as funding for a new seaport facility, airport, and roads, making China Sri Lanka's largest aid donor (gifting \$1.2 billion) and largest investor.<sup>25</sup> Tucked under an elbow of Indian territory in the east, Bangladesh has also benefited enormously from Chinese support. In addition to typical investments and sales of military equipment, China also helped Bangladesh test-fire a Chinese-supplied C-802A antiship missile in the Bay of Bengal.<sup>26</sup>

This understanding also extends to other countries across the Asian continent. Although it is important to continue our support of these nations, no other country in Asia—with the exception of Russia and Japan (which is already a strong ally but with a limited military)—can fulfill the role of balancer. However, opportunities to co-opt Russia as a potential ally are slim, and Japan has serious troubles with its (albeit large) economy, demography, and limited domestic resources. It is also highly unlikely Japan would jettison its long-standing alliance with the United States to bandwagon with China due to their historical disagreements over World War II, the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, and the recent fishing trawler collision. At the same time, India represents the best opportunity for developing a new US strategic relationship among the major powers. Given the likely power differential on the Asian continent, with India not large enough to balance China alone, the United States represents the best opportunity for India to resist Chinese hegemony.

Besides its potential to balance a rising China, India also occupies a strategic location along the increasingly important and crowded Indian Ocean. This region is home to vital oil and commercial shipping lanes as well as the strategic navigational bottlenecks of the Straits of Hormuz, Malacca, and Bab el Mandeb. With the Asian continent containing the two most populous nations in the world, each experiencing phenomenal growth in both GDP and demand for resources, these waters will form a centerpiece of global strategies in the coming decades. It is worth noting that 40 percent of seaborne crude oil pass through the Strait of Hormuz, and half the world's oil flow and a quarter of global trade pass through the Strait of Malacca. Furthermore, as China analyzes its own energy dependence on oil and natural gas, it cannot ignore that 85 percent of the oil it consumes passes through the Strait of Malacca. This gives China an even greater motive to ensure the region is secure while also pursuing various other routes for this precious energy.<sup>27</sup> Since economics and security are inextricably linked, these choke points represent potential obstacles and weaknesses for these emerging economies, as the demand for resources may one day outstrip the supply flow through these channels. India knows it is unable to secure these commercial trading routes and respond to various crises on its own. To meet this limitation, it has embarked on a strategy of working with regional partners to patrol these areas and develop working relationships to respond to potential flashpoints and crises. Since

the United States acts as the principal guarantor of world and regional security, India has a strong interest in partnering with US efforts.

The US-Indian relationship is characterized by more than just China and the security of energy resources. Numerous policy makers have identified a multitude of overlapping interests or areas where the United States is best positioned to advance those shared interests—preserving access to the global commons, countering terrorism and violent extremism, promoting international nonproliferation efforts, addressing human rights concerns, ensuring a stable and secure South Asia (including Afghanistan), and advancing the cause of democracy.<sup>28</sup> Rather than detail each of these interests in turn, this analysis addresses broader diplomatic and economic goals as well as specific defense policies to promote this relationship. Prior to detailing those recommendations, it is important to first look at challenges to developing this relationship and the perceptions of India's two principal strategic threats, China and Pakistan.

## **Indian Challenges**

Encouraging increased cooperation between the United States and India is imperative for US security interests in the future. With the proper focus and effort, this relationship will pay handsome dividends to both countries; however, these greater ties raise additional questions and issues. For instance, how much can we expect from India in the short run toward developing this partnership, and will concrete political successes immediately derive from it? Stephen Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta argue that much of India's difficulty in improving its strategic position is due to its deliberate policy of "strategic restraint," and they defend their argument by examining the difficulties India has had due to a lack of civilian defense expertise, organizational problems, "weak planning, individual service-centered doctrines, and [a] disconnect between strategic objectives and the pursuit of new technology."<sup>29</sup> India's post-independence focus on autonomy suggests it will continue its strategic restraint, making it difficult for the United States to encourage greater Indian participation in thorny international issues. It is possible, however, the United States can use India's modernization and increasing capabilities to help relax its strategic restraint in the long run, although this will likely involve a gradual evolution in Indian thinking, not a radical departure from the past.

It is important to recognize that India is very hesitant to appear as party to an anti-China alliance or, for that matter, to become involved on either side of any foreign dispute; this neutrality has formed a central part of its foreign policy since independence. Throughout the Cold War, India was an essential member of the nonaligned movement, a collection of small states and former colonies dedicated to remaining neutral. Their policy of using force only as a last resort and staying removed from others' conflicts has arguably been very beneficial to India. It has been able to focus on generating domestic growth as opposed to promoting broad strategic objectives. Unfortunately, its neutrality has at times been indistinguishable from China's insistence on nonintervention in the internal affairs of other nations. Given India's propensity for isolationism, the challenge for the United States becomes how to gently coax it into the more participative foreign policy we desire.

India recognizes that China will play a crucial, if not dominant, role in Asian affairs in the decades to come. China is undoubtedly the economic powerhouse of the region, and India recognizes that the growth it cherishes will depend on successful trade flows and peace among its neighboring countries. The immediate benefits of maintaining amicable relations with China far outweigh the posturing of a balancing coalition. Any balancing behavior will be met in turn with hostility from China, disrupting the growth (and potential power) of all nations in the region. India, as well as most other countries around China's periphery, recognizes the potential issues posed by a strong and assertive China but seems satisfied for now to merely prosper together. Indeed, China is the largest trading partner for India, and both countries have committed to accelerating the flow of goods and capital from the current \$60 billion annually to \$100 billion by 2015.<sup>30</sup> The ASEAN states have a free trade agreement (FTA) with China and count it among their top trading partners,<sup>31</sup> so despite any uneasiness about Chinese intentions, it is unlikely that any ASEAN state would agree to join an explicit anti-Chinese alliance either. If India expects to grow faster than China in the long term, it could prefer to bide its time and wait for the engine of economic growth to ease it to prominence rather than embark on a pernicious containment strategy.

India's reluctance to join a formal alliance is a consequence not only of its perceptions of China and the outside world but also its internal political structure. Few places in the world can match the vast diversity of the modern state of India. With 17 languages and 22,000 dialects, the

country was mostly a collection of principalities and kingdoms for most of its long, rich history. Even today Indian politics is dominated by regional parties that win elections at the expense of national parties by running on platforms of narrow local concerns rather than broad national interests. This leads to government by coalition, where each party in the coalition can command significant political power and resources within its state but has little appeal to Indians elsewhere. This diversity therefore leads to the central authorities deferring to regional governments and makes it exceedingly difficult for the national government to “define a national interest, mobilize the country behind it, and then execute a set of policies to achieve its goals.”<sup>32</sup> Due to the fractured and regional nature of Indian politics, there is not likely to be a bold new direction in India’s national security strategy.<sup>33</sup> In fact, this factionalism hampers not only foreign policy but domestic efforts as well. It is significant that as India moves to address local or domestic problems, the ruling Congress Party routinely runs into difficulty generating meaningful laws, having failed to pass a significant bit of legislation since its election in 2009.<sup>34</sup> This domestic political environment may represent the biggest US challenge *vis-à-vis* India—that is, political paralysis could upset the Indian trajectory to open up, grow economically and militarily, and ultimately prosper as an Asian balancer.<sup>35</sup> The current government is also sensitive to criticism that India is beholden to US desires; therefore, it will be eager to place limits on US-Indian co-operation to assert its independence. This does not mean that relations will permanently stall due to domestic political concerns but that progress will be slow and require the steady patience of US policymakers. Since India’s military represents one of its few national institutions, the United States can make important inroads toward cultivating a flexible partnership by strengthening ties between US and Indian military forces.

Although reluctant to join a balancing coalition against China, Indians sense that Chinese capabilities and internal weaknesses strongly argue for a distinct hedging posture, even if they outwardly deny the focus is their neighbor to the north. If China’s growth stalls and its leadership is unable to placate its citizens with increased income and employment opportunities, the legitimacy of the regime may be threatened by the rumblings of a disaffected population. In the past the Chinese government has responded in two ways to challenges from its people: repression or stoking nationalist sentiment. If the Communist Party chooses repression, it could involve a vast expansion in military force or mobilization to affected areas, which

on its own can be destabilizing to neighboring countries as Chinese intentions grow murkier. Alternatively, as India grows stronger and consumes a larger proportion of resources and trade, nationalist sentiment to maintain China's standing could be used to focus internal dissent on India as a foreign distraction (similar to China's focus on Japanese atrocities in WWII). Even benign Chinese growth will cause friction as it seeks to expand its influence and fulfill the needs of its modernizing population. Although India does not want to appear confrontational and views the rising tide of globalization as beneficial to both nations, it cannot ignore the risks associated with this growth. Indeed, it is reasonable to project that the closeness between India and the United States will continue to solidify as China grows and flexes its muscles across the Asian continent. Consequently, this relationship will be driven as much by China's growth and actions as by any US policy or effort.

## **Chinese and Pakistani Perceptions**

Despite its own growth rates and optimistic future, China's security calculations will change and grow more complicated as it looks not only at the relative decline of the United States but also at the rising power of a regional rival. China will have to assume that just as its own foreign policy grew more assertive with its increased share of global GDP and trade, India's will most likely do so as well. However, China will not have a long history of Indian assertiveness, as with the United States, to gauge probable Indian reactions to its maneuvering. Furthermore, this growth in Indian military spending will appear to China similar to the way Chinese military advances appear to the United States—that of a lesser but growing power hedging against the influence of the greater power. So, as the United States frets about Chinese antiaccess weaponry, the Chinese may see the Indian military buildup as a bulwark against Chinese influence in the region. No other nation on India's periphery would merit this level of military expansion. Although India and Pakistan continue their decades-long rivalry, India's conventional might is far superior to Pakistan's and does not necessitate this level of growth to maintain deterrence, particularly in naval power, a service that would have limited utility in a localized conflict with Pakistan. China also will be forced to deal with the asymmetry of a potential rivalry with both the United States and India where antiaccess weaponry that may be successful at challenging US power

projection in the Pacific Ocean may have limited utility vis-à-vis India. And unlike the United States, which must project power across a massive ocean, India will forever be present in the neighborhood and adjacent to many areas of Chinese interest. These are not hypothetical concerns but are founded on real differences between the two nations. These include, but are not limited to, unresolved border claims that have previously led to war, growing ties between China and Pakistan, Indian support of the Dalai Lama, Chinese blustering in the South China Sea, and concern over Chinese warships patrolling the main south Asian trade routes. Therefore, it is hard to imagine how two nations with these divergent interests can rise so quickly and not view one another with guarded suspicion.

In its bilateral relationship with China, the United States is trying to pursue a policy of cautious engagement where it welcomes Chinese growth and modernization and encourages participation in a constructive manner on the world stage. Nevertheless, the United States cannot deny the realities of power and is simultaneously hedging its bets for any future disagreements. As it is trying to deepen engagement with China, evidenced by Admiral Mullen's trip to bolster Chinese goodwill,<sup>36</sup> it recognizes that promoting ties with India may raise serious questions in China about US intentions. These are legitimate fears of encirclement by the United States or active attempts to undermine Chinese growth and power. However, the United States should not retreat from efforts to improve its position in the long run, even though it may risk antagonizing the Chinese leadership today. There are worries that each country is acting to strengthen the belief that conflict is inevitable and that pursuing this relationship with India will merely reinforce that cycle, but it is also possible that this friction will continue to rise, even without closer US-Indian cooperation. As China develops a weapon whose only plausible purpose is to counter the US military, it is hardly sensible strategy to pull back and do nothing in the hope that a peaceful transition of power will occur in the future. Despite US efforts in recent years to improve understanding between the two nations, concerns over Chinese secrecy and lack of transparency remain or have grown worse with the development of its new J-20 stealth fighter,<sup>37</sup> long-range antiship ballistic missile,<sup>38</sup> advanced submarine technology, and the forthcoming launch of its first aircraft carrier.<sup>39</sup>

Besides its dynamic relationship with China, the United States has been engaged in a delicate balancing act between Pakistan and India. Without a doubt it has significant interests with both nations, but it is an unfortu-

nate fact that assistance to one is viewed with suspicion by the other. The historical animosity from partition; wars in 1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999; the dispute over Kashmir; and nuclear rivalry all serve as reminders for how difficult it will be for both nations to reconcile their differences.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, Pakistani support to the United States following 9/11 has been of both crucial and disputed sincerity in recent years. For the foreseeable future, the United States will need to rely on Pakistani cooperation as it continues to fight al-Qaeda and associated extremist groups. However, US grand strategy cannot forever prioritize the “AfPak” theater over other vital security concerns. At some point the United States will conclude its massive involvement in the region, and its concern over Pakistani dislike of its Indian policy will have to diminish. Meanwhile, there are a few basic policies the United States can pursue to ameliorate friction with Pakistan over closer US-Indian ties. It can publicly support the independence of Afghanistan to prevent its use as a client state and affirm US commitment to a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute. It can also push through the pending US-Pakistan bilateral investment treaty (BIT) and revisit US-Pakistan free trade agreement negotiations to complement the closer economic ties with India.<sup>41</sup> The conclusion of a BIT or FTA can do far more to benefit the Pakistani economy than will a mere increase in aid. The United States should also take the lead in promoting greater economic ties between Pakistan and India as a further confidence-building measure.

Finally, a more contentious strategy might be to focus India’s military support on weapon systems that are less provocative toward Pakistan. These might include naval modernization and airlift and surveillance platforms, while ignoring ground attack systems such as APCs, artillery pieces, and tanks. These ground-centric weapons would likely play a small part as a means to secure the global commons, provide stability in the Indian Ocean, or balance Chinese expansion. The Indian army is consumed with domestic counterinsurgency and obsessed with its Cold Start doctrine for war with Pakistan, thereby making power projection beyond its borders unlikely or limited to peacekeeping operations. However, this strategy of tailoring weapons and technology assistance to lessen Pakistani objections has the strong potential to harm the very ties with India the United States is trying to cultivate. This policy would make US-Indian defense ties (an enormous aspect of this budding relationship) constrained by the concerns of Pakistan rather than driven by robust strategic analysis. It may also be misconstrued as viewing the India-Pakistan conflict as the central or over-

riding issue in US-Indian relations. This option seems highly unlikely, and the United States should focus on economic initiatives with Pakistan as the primary mitigator. And since Pakistan will most likely view any security assistance to India as threatening, the United States can expect to see even closer ties between Pakistan and China in future years as Pakistan seeks a nearby ally who will not provide in-kind support to India. Moving forward, the United States should disaggregate its substantial interests with Pakistan from its overtures to India in the hope of maintaining good relations with both. In fact, India's own strategic restraint and wariness of a formal alliance with the United States may assist the US-Pakistan relationship by limiting cooperation to a more subtle level.

Despite Chinese and Pakistani concerns governing closer ties between the United States and India, the United States must pursue sensible policies to ensure its involvement in Asia far into the future. The blending of Indian and American interests should yield a productive partnership as the United States adapts to the new powerful nations growing over the horizon. That is not to say there will not be disagreements between the two nations, but rather both states should strive to continue their path to cooperation despite any setbacks in the political arena. Forging these relationships takes time, effort, and consistency; but with the proper direction, this strategy will ensure the United States is prepared to evolve and maintain its influence far into the future.

## **Diplomacy and Economics**

During the Cold War, the United States forged a relationship with another growing power facing uncertainty in its future. That nation had a long and distinguished history of independence and self-sufficiency, yet it also recognized the benefits of partnering with the United States as an equal power with converging interests. Given its tradition of independence and pride, that nation faced strong domestic pressure to view the United States as anything but an ally. However, the two nations were able to forge a surprisingly delicate yet malleable relationship to resist the expansion of Soviet power while simultaneously improving relations between the two governments and their economies. In the early 1960s, few strategists and diplomats would have predicted that China and the United States would initiate a process to reconcile their differences in the interest of resisting a common foe. In the early stages of this opening, both countries

continued their domestic propaganda opposing one another while quietly moving toward rapprochement. While circumstances of the US-Indian relationship are vastly different (and much more amicable) today, there are, ironically, lessons we can take from this 1960s opening to China in understanding a US-Indian strategic course vis-à-vis China.

On what basis might the symbol of the capitalist world partner with Communist China at the tail end of its Cultural Revolution? Henry Kissinger argues this was accomplished through a system of “common convictions, not formal obligations.”<sup>42</sup> Neither country was able or willing to sign a mutual defense treaty nor other sort of alliance obligation similar to those concluded between the United States and its European allies. The countering of Soviet influence in Asia would require a more subtle and, in Kissinger’s eyes, strict realist approach.<sup>43</sup> While it might seem absurd to compare Nixon’s opening to China with our current efforts to co-opt India, the idea of pursuing a relationship based on parallel interests in the absence of a formalized alliance is highly relevant. There are fundamentally different interests at play in today’s Asian environment, but the concept is still valid.

The China of today is not the Soviet Union of yesterday. There are major differences in ideology, action, and especially, formal pronouncements of strategy. It is worth emphasizing that the United States should not try to revive George Kennan’s containment strategy to resist some fanciful overt military drive for Chinese hegemony in the near term. The United States and Cold War-China faced a clear and common enemy whose conflicts had erupted into military force (through proxy with the United States and directly with China in the Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969).<sup>44</sup> Today the Indians have a lasting border dispute with China but have not faced it militarily for five decades and actively seek its cooperation. While China’s opaque military buildup and mercantilist policies may be disconcerting and require hedging, any sort of containment strategy would be unpopular as well as geopolitically and economically unstable. Although the United States and Cold War-China faced a common enemy, they lacked the shared attributes of the US-Indian relationship that are more suited to an enduring partnership—a common ideology and political system and a robust set of shared interests like those enumerated above. While contemporary China may concern both the United States and India without classifying it as a “common enemy,” the two nations can instead rely on a list of other interests to encourage this partnership.

The lesson is clear: the United States and Cold War–China were able to generate their partnership by “sidestepping the rhetoric of two decades and staying focused on the fundamental strategic objective of a geopolitical dialogue leading to a recasting of the Cold War international order.”<sup>45</sup> While the United States is not attempting something as dramatic as recasting the Cold War international order, it is looking to generate a strategic direction with India. As Kissinger noted, “The opening to China was part of an overall strategic design, not a shopping list of mutual irritations.”<sup>46</sup> While this may sound sensible, India may be more interested in that shopping list of issues and a more transactional relationship rather than weaving together disparate policies to advance the more strategic partnership the United States desires.

Recognizing the pride and history of Indian strategic thought (strategic restraint, nonalignment, anticolonialism), we can generate a lasting partnership to pursue parallel interests without forcing India to feel like a junior partner or supplicant for US assistance. The United States can recognize India’s autonomy and encourage greater cooperation by continually acknowledging the nature of this relationship and the boundaries of cooperation. Although some in the United States may want this shared strategic vision to be an overt China-balancing posture, this will surely not materialize. Instead, the United States can tangentially prepare to achieve that goal by guiding a strategic outlook that focuses on economic opening and a security structure of providing stability through pursuit of shared interests as opposed to a unifying agreement on a shared worldview. In this way, the United States can foster bilateral ties and conclude efforts on shared issues to move forward, albeit in an occasionally disjointed fashion. Thus, as the United States approaches India to generate the desired strategic partnership, it must recognize that, in the short run, the relationship may be marked more by high-profile transactional failures—like the exclusion of US fighters from the medium multirole combat aircraft (MMRCA) deal and India’s nuclear liability legislation<sup>47</sup>—as opposed to concrete successes of diplomatic heft.

The challenge on the diplomatic front will be to recognize where interests intersect and generate mutually agreeable policies to advance those interests. Without the concrete obligations of a treaty or alliance, or the bond of a common enemy, those interests can be miscalculated or prioritized differently. This could lead to diverging interests causing the delay or obstruction of progress. One such interest is India’s pursuit of

Iran as a “strategic rear base” or future energy partner.<sup>48</sup> Specifically, it is strongly interested in a plan to pipe Iranian natural gas directly to India through Pakistan.<sup>49</sup> The close Indian-Iranian relationship is difficult to reconcile with US efforts to isolate Iran and muster international support for additional punitive actions. Therefore, the United States must diplomatically and strategically pursue broad, regional objectives while retaining the ability to compartmentalize sensitive issues. If the United States and China could overcome their differing interests over Taiwan (including two Chinese artillery campaigns against the Nationalist-held islands in the 1950s),<sup>50</sup> few policies should restrain US-Indian progress.

The following policies could each be viewed as an individual issue, but the enduring challenge is to use them as tools to create a broader strategic direction beyond the simple talk of a brighter future of cooperation. There will not be one policy that magically promotes the relationship or convinces India to form an alliance. Instead, the relationship must grow through a series of reforms and initiatives, most rather banal on their own, but the accumulating successes will lead to greater ties and influence in the aggregate. These proposals are a brief synopsis of a few major policies that must take place to keep the US-Indian relationship from stagnating.

To begin, the United States and India should look at their economic ties as a main avenue to closer integration and cooperation. Although bilateral US-Indian trade has grown substantially, the United States lags behind the UAE in absolute terms as a trade partner with India, while India is only the 12th largest trading partner for the United States.<sup>51</sup> As an impetus for expanding these ties, the United States and India should revitalize negotiations for a bilateral investment treaty as well as a free trade agreement, though this may not be politically feasible for the United States,<sup>52</sup> or even for India. This was recently demonstrated by the Indian government’s acquiescence to domestic pressure to abandon a proposal allowing large foreign retailers and supermarket chains into its domestic market.<sup>53</sup> As for an FTA, the United States still lags behind the European Union, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN member states that have either concluded this agreement or are drawing closer to doing so.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, the United States should partner with India in regional and global trade regimes, harmonizing efforts through the World Trade Organization and the Doha Round, as well as opening more opportunities for private sector US-Indian ties through business forums and expanding the H1B visa program.<sup>55</sup> These efforts to lower barriers to foreign direct invest-

ment, remove onerous offset requirements, and abandon foreign ownership restrictions will yield macroeconomic benefits to all nations involved. However, it is unlikely India will wholeheartedly adopt these reforms in the short run due to the political challenges enumerated above, although there has been limited progress in allowing “qualified” foreign investors to invest directly in Indian equities.<sup>56</sup> The United States and India should also build on their recent collaborations at the G-20, the Nuclear Security Summit, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum and use these efforts as a foundation and vehicle for further progress on important economic and security issues.<sup>57</sup>

The United States and India have yet to build on the historic civil nuclear agreement of the Bush administration. Some important steps toward nuclear cooperation would be to reevaluate export control restrictions, lower barriers to trade and technology transfers, and usher India into the vast array of nonproliferation regimes (including the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, Australia Group, and Wassenaar Arrangement).<sup>58</sup> This can build on the removal of several subsidiaries of India’s Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) from the US Entity List to allow greater high-technology trade.<sup>59</sup> The United States should also aim to harmonize Indian “laws, policies and practices to those of NPT members, irrespective of its non-member status”<sup>60</sup> as a way to move past the deadlock of insisting on India’s acceptance of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Finally the United States should continue to support India’s permanent membership on the UN Security Council (UNSC) in an effort to move membership toward a more balanced composition. This support should progress with a comprehensive initiative or time line, perhaps as part of a broader UNSC adjustment that jettisons previous US objection to the G4 proposal (Japan, Germany, India, and Brazil).<sup>61</sup> This could accompany a recalibration of a number of international institutions, such as ending European domination of the IMF, to gain greater emerging market buy-in.<sup>62</sup> Granting India greater responsibility and visibility through a prominent role in these institutions can help it evolve away from its strategic restraint and move toward a more substantial global role.

## **Defense and Security Cooperation**

Along with broader diplomatic and economic approaches, the more prominent aspect of the US-Indian relationship will be the substantial

defense and security ties between the two nations. It is worth reemphasizing that an increased defense relationship will not directly lead to a formal alliance. The world seems to be moving away from rigid security pacts between nations, and the United States should resist the temptation to attempt to codify this relationship. India is not likely to pursue policies that deliberately or openly antagonize its Chinese neighbor, and a formal alliance would most certainly do so. Its interests at the moment dictate that it pursue an amicable relationship with China and all its other neighbors (although its efforts have had mixed success), and we must keep that in mind before charging headlong into pursuing a NATO of the east. Despite these limitations to a security relationship, there are a number of measures the United States can pursue to generate a more comprehensive partnership that builds the capacity of the Indian defense establishment while improving interoperability between US and Indian military forces.

Before detailing policies to advance this goal, it is necessary to briefly discuss the Indian military services and their potential contribution to a US-Indian defense relationship. Looking at potential benefits, we see the security of the Asian continent and the Indian Ocean as the primary focus for the near to midterm. India also has a distinguished history of international peacekeeping. The potential areas for US-Indian cooperation argue strongly for an air and naval service priority. The Indian army's capability for power projection is limited to its Cold Start doctrine of a swift cross-border movement into Pakistan, and its preoccupation with the Pakistani threat, border defense, and assisting police and paramilitary forces with domestic counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations makes it unlikely to play much of a combat role outside its immediate borders.<sup>63</sup> Conversely, the Indian navy has been steadily increasing its strategic outlook and is moving toward an ability to exert sea control throughout the Indian Ocean, with a focus on economic and energy security. It has repeatedly sailed with various partner nations where its performance has been "rated as NATO-quality," it maintains two separate fleets, and it has been viewed as the primary service for India's strategic projection.<sup>64</sup> Airpower represents another opportunity for India to generate strategic effects, and the Indian air force is moving beyond its highly capable airlift and reconnaissance operations to a more offensively oriented doctrine and posture most evident in its significant purchases of aircraft and technology.<sup>65</sup> Indian air and naval power will play a crucial role in the emerging Air-Sea Battle concept, a method of operation under development by US planners to

counter sophisticated antiaccess and area-denial weaponry. Designed to cope with the “tyranny of distance” and the vulnerability of forward bases, this strategy will need the cooperation of capable allies positioned at the center or immediate periphery of possible zones of confrontation and conflict. India is one of the few nations that can potentially satisfy these requirements and provide the United States with greater flexibility to pursue this strategy. Given this understanding of US-Indian security goals and the likely involvement of Indian military services, the following defense and security policies are needed to translate US strategic aims into positive action.

### **Revitalize US-Indian Defense Exercises**

One of the primary methods for increasing both the capacity and compatibility of the Indian military is to revitalize US-Indian defense exercises. These exercises allow the exchange of important lessons learned, familiarize both nations with the operations of their counterparts, and lay a bedrock of understanding for future cooperation. The United States and Indian militaries have successfully concluded a number of exercises over the previous decade. While the two armies have successfully interacted on counter-insurgency, jungle warfare, and contingency operations, this has been on a much smaller scale to the cooperation seen in the other services, and experts argue that the Indian army is “not yet ready for complex joint exercises or for exploring new strategic roles.”<sup>66</sup> The bilateral engagements should continue, nevertheless, and eventually expand despite these limitations.

The Indian and US navies have participated in a series of bilateral and multilateral exercises. These provide extensive learning opportunities for both countries, especially during the annual Malabar series, the 15th of which was completed in April 2011. During the Malabar maneuvers (in some years a purely bilateral arrangement between the United States and India, and in others a multilateral affair including Australia, Japan, and Singapore), the various navies involved “execute anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare, air defense, live-fire gunnery training, and visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) evolutions.”<sup>67</sup> This cooperation has also included diving and salvage rescue exercises, the sixth completed in January 2011.<sup>68</sup> Although the “Indian Navy has more joint exercises with the US than any other nation,”<sup>69</sup> it is imperative to continue building on these recent successes. These maneuvers should move into more robust arrange-

ments farther from Indian shores and incorporate short-notice and less-scripted exercises to simulate responses to incidents over the vast expanses of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. These could eventually move to exercises conducted at multiple locations to test the organizational and logistical capability of the two forces to operate toward two or more ends simultaneously. Given the sharp Chinese response to the multilateral Malabar 2007 exercise, which it viewed as an anti-Chinese war-game alliance, the US and Indian navies must move cautiously when reincorporating other nations into these exercises.<sup>70</sup>

The US and Indian air forces have also undertaken a number of exercises in the previous decade. The most widely discussed were Cope India 04 and 05. During these exercises, USAF F-15s and F-16s flew multiple rounds of simulated air combat against their Indian counterparts operating a variety of fighters, such as Russian Su-30s, MiG-27s, and MiG-21s and French Mirage 2000s. Although these exercises were helpful to evaluate air combat tactics, many observers were more interested in the results of head-to-head engagements between foreign- and US-built fighters to determine the superior aircraft.<sup>71</sup> In particular, many arguments surrounding the exercise pointed to Indian successes against American aircraft as an argument for additional F-22 procurement. This narrow and singular focus is misplaced. Rather than pursuing an isolated competition to gauge US equipment, these exercises must occur regularly with the aim of laying the bedrock for sustained US-Indian cooperation, not competition. The United States has moved in the right direction through its Red Flag 08 and Cope India 09 exercises that at least aimed to place US and Indian forces in collaborative as opposed to adversarial arrangements. Additionally, Cope India 09 aimed to generate partner capacity in an airpower competency most likely to be used in the near future: airlift operations in support of humanitarian or disaster relief efforts.<sup>72</sup> These exercises are limited in nature and over time need to broaden into more robust interservice exercises that better reflect future conflict scenarios and the US focus on the Air-Sea Battle concept of operations. Like the Navy's Malabar exercises, they must become more regular with yearly or biyearly appearances at existing operations such as Red Flag, as well as generating US-India-specific exercises on both Indian and US soil. These exercises should aim to not just share how each other operates but to also leverage that knowledge to generate policy and a bank of best practices that both forces can rely on in future real-world scenarios as they develop concepts

on how to operate effectively together. They can also focus on limited conflicts, with an emphasis on the ability to fight decisively without forcing the opposing side to escalate, particularly if the opponent is a nuclear-armed state.<sup>73</sup> Obviously, these levels of exercises are complex and require a general evolution as the Indian military modernizes and the military relationship between the two countries matures. Regardless, it is useful to have an end goal in mind.

### **Encourage Military Equipment Sales and Joint Development**

Perhaps the most visible sign of Indian military modernization is the massive purchases of equipment and aircraft. It is also important to recognize the substantial political benefits some countries have gained by exporting vast amounts of military material to India. Unfortunately, the concrete successes from this type of policy can be hard to cite. For example, Israel is the second highest provider of weapon systems and associated equipment to India, but these sales have yielded little in the political or diplomatic arena. Despite numerous sales and joint development, the Israelis were rebuffed on the international stage when India professed its “commitment to the Palestinian cause” and voted to support the Goldstone Report in the United Nations, a damning report accusing both the Israelis and Palestinians of possible war crimes in the Gaza Strip.<sup>74</sup> India also cosponsored an amendment condemning Israeli settlements (ultimately vetoed by the United States) and promised to support Palestinian membership in the UN.<sup>75</sup> These political setbacks for the Israelis help highlight an important point: that the varied tracks of sustained partnership building may operate at different speeds and yield benefits and/or setbacks simultaneously in different areas.

Despite any limitations of military sales in the political arena, these sales will still be an important facet of our relationship. They can help promote trade and similarity between the two militaries, and the US military can assist these efforts through showcasing the capabilities of its equipment at exercises and encouraging more exchange programs to train on US equipment. This can help overcome Indian reticence to rely on the United States for weapons systems and support after these were cut off by sanctions following its 1965 war with Pakistan and 1998 nuclear test.<sup>76</sup> The difficulty in implementing this policy is that in the long run it may be difficult to sustain. It runs counter to Indian efforts to increase their own domestic production, and the United States may have difficulty competing with other foreign sales, as revealed in the decision to exclude both

American aircraft (F-16 and F/A-18) from the MMRCA competition, a lucrative deal worth approximately \$11 billion.<sup>77</sup> A large part of this denial was possibly due to US export control restrictions on sensitive technology and may yield a lesson for both countries to lower their barriers on the transfer of technology and equipment. The United States is challenged with trying to conduct more sales in an environment of greater diversification among Indian suppliers. This may or may not be intentional, but the recent decision to favor the Rafale and Eurofighter in the MMRCA competition demonstrates the importance Europe will have alongside Russia, Israel, and the United States in fulfilling India's military hardware needs.

India has already proven to have one of the world's most significant appetites for weaponry and new technology, surpassing China to rank as the top arms importer in the world.<sup>78</sup> It has aggressively pursued equipment, aircraft, and ships from numerous nations and suppliers, including a number of US purchases such as 12 P-8 surveillance aircraft, the amphibious transport ship USS *Trenton*, and possibly the Apache Longbow and E-2D Hawkeye.<sup>79</sup> Although the United States failed to secure the MMRCA deal, the Indian parliament has approved the purchase of 10 C-17 aircraft (with possibly 5–7 more)<sup>80</sup> and 6–12 C-130Js at a cost of \$4.1 billion and \$1 billion, respectively.<sup>81</sup> But even these purchases were forced to abide by India's 30-percent offset rule, which requires Boeing and Lockheed Martin to invest 30 percent of the contract in India's domestic aerospace and defense industry. In the case of the C-17 buy, this investment includes engine test and wind tunnel facilities for India's DRDO.<sup>82</sup> This policy has the obvious long-term aim of producing a domestic industrial-security apparatus capable of fulfilling India's equipment requirements to reduce the need for foreign purchases. If successful, the prospects for military hardware sales to India may be greatest in the short to medium term, but the United States can evolve this relationship over time away from direct sales of completed systems and more toward joint development. Although the United States faces challenges in increasing military equipment sales to India, this is still an important component of increasing US-Indian ties and harmonizing military relationships.

### **Actively Pursue Joint Disaster Relief Work**

To build on the successes of US-India joint naval tsunami relief work in 2004 and Exercise Cope India 08,<sup>83</sup> the United States needs to actively include India in its efforts to provide disaster and humanitarian relief. One

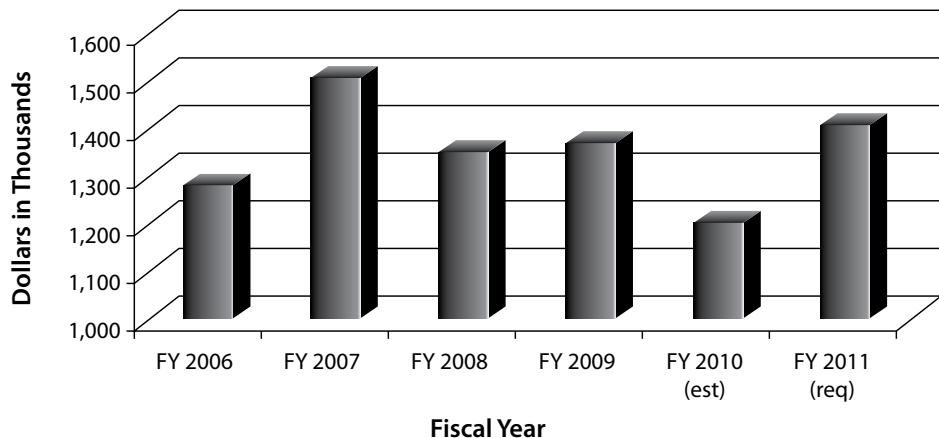
missed opportunity was the Japanese disaster in March 2011. The United States mounted a significant relief operation to the hard hit areas of Japan, including massive naval support from the US Seventh Fleet, airpower logistics support, and even an MC-130 and special tactics team flying into Sendai to open the airfield and stand up air traffic control support.<sup>84</sup> This disaster was of such massive proportions that partnering with India on the substantial relief efforts involved could have provided real-world experience for conducting joint humanitarian missions in the future. Previous cooperation between the two navies during the 2004 tsunami relief effort in South Asia was notable and should have provided a baseline of cooperation for future efforts farther abroad. However, this experience was not translated into more active cooperation on the humanitarian efforts for Japan in the Pacific region, where the US and Indian navies strive to operate jointly.

The United States and India opened the door to cooperation with the recent sale of the USS *Trenton*, C-17s, and C-130s mentioned above. Not only does this equipment help strengthen India's logistical capacity and strategic and tactical airlift, it also provides India a useful tool for ferrying supplies and personnel for disaster response. The United States can leverage these sales into future cooperative exercises, like Cope India 08, and eventually pair this equipment with its American counterparts on real-world humanitarian operations. And since humanitarian aid and disaster response are relatively uncontroversial and nonthreatening, the two countries can use these efforts to increase compatibility and contacts between their forces without appearing confrontational or truculent toward other nations.

### **Promote Greater Educational Ties**

US programs on security assistance to foreign nations comprise a number of elements, chief among them educating foreign military personnel. India is one of only 10 nations invited to participate in the USAF School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS) program to develop future strategists. However, none of the military education programs have mirrored the rapid growth of Indian students in American civilian universities, which count nearly 100,000 young Indians among their student bodies.<sup>85</sup> Despite the rising importance of India in US grand strategy, the money it receives as part of the US International Military Education and Training (IMET) program has plateaued over

the past several years (see fig. 1). Rather than a constantly upward slope, IMET appropriations for India instead follow a more sporadic pattern.



**Figure 1: Indian IMET funding, FY-06 to FY-11**

(Data compiled from Department of State, “International Military Education and Training Account Summary,” Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security, 23 June 2010, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/sat/c14562.htm>.)

A large part of Indian security modernization revolves around not only the military exercises mentioned above but also addressing the organizational shortcomings of the Indian defense establishment. Increasing the participation of Indian officers at all levels of US PME programs is essential to building capacity, interoperability, and positive relationships between future leaders. To supplement this formal education, there need to be dedicated gatherings that bring together the best strategic thinkers from both nations to develop long-range strategy and help give focus to the ever-growing number of exercises between India and the United States. There should also be a focus on educating senior civilian leaders, since a demonstrated lack of expertise among politicians and bureaucrats exists in the defense realm.<sup>86</sup> This education should include formal training in service schools as well as informal conferences and observer roles for senior Indian military and civilian personnel to glean lessons learned from the US military (particularly on joint operations and organization) that they can apply to India’s own reforms.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, this focus on increasing partner capacity must include the Indian defense bureaucracy, not merely its military forces.

## **Generate US-Indian Tabletop Strategic Exercises**

In addition to bringing together strategists from each nation, it is worthwhile to involve operational commanders and their staffs in tabletop strategic exercises. These exercises have been highly successful at all levels of the US government to help participants think through their responses to a critical event. These simulations have helped senior officials assess their ability to respond to crises ranging from bioterrorism to the loss of critical energy infrastructure.<sup>88</sup> Such exercises require minimal resources aside from a dedicated facilitator and the cost to transport, house, and feed exercise participants. Yet, the gain from these simulations is invaluable, since it can expose gaps in strategy, resources, or time lines and help smooth out processes in preparation for a real-world event. Tabletop exercises are also less provocative than conducting massive military exercises near the border or off the coast of a non-participating country. Therefore, the United States and India should move toward yearly tabletop simulations concurrent with or in addition to existing joint exercises.

## **Increase Cyberspace Cooperation**

While US-Indian cooperation in cyberspace remains in its nascent stages, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding allowing their computer emergency response teams to coordinate efforts on cyber security, cyber policy, and responses to cyber attacks.<sup>89</sup> It is critical to build beyond this “understanding” and toward concrete activities that can complement more traditional defense and military coordination. Combining US and Indian power in the future will depend in large part on the ability to fuse coalition cyber operations into the battlespace. Given the highly sophisticated cyber warfare capabilities of other Asian nations, it is possible that a future conflict could be limited to the cyber or information realm and never involve hypersonic missiles or Su-30 aircraft (the 2007 cyber attack on Estonia provides a quick example).<sup>90</sup> Cyber attacks may also act as the opening salvo or accompany conventional actions in a future conflict, most notably demonstrated in the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008.<sup>91</sup> To prepare for this contingency, it is critical the United States assist the Indian air force in developing a robust cyber warfare capability and also conduct exchanges and exercises similar to cyber coalition events among NATO countries.<sup>92</sup> Understandably, this may cause worries about sharing sensitive information, tactics, and procedures. However, both countries have conducted numerous ground, naval, and air combat

exercises around the globe while still safeguarding national secrets, so it is reasonable to assume that this capability exists for cyberspace cooperation as well. Although cyberspace has only recently gained importance as a medium of warfare, we cannot ignore its crucial role in future high-technology societies. Furthermore, cyberspace cooperation must extend to the civilian sector and help defend against cyber espionage and cyber terrorism to protect each nation's infrastructure in its increasingly entwined economy. A number of conferences and summits are slated to address the legal, political, and technological challenges of these issues, and the United States and India must remain at the forefront of this discussion and coordination.<sup>93</sup>

### **Expand Counterpiracy Efforts**

As the frequency of attacks, size of ransoms demanded, and duration of kidnappings have accelerated over the past decade, international efforts to reduce piracy and secure vulnerable waterways have taken on greater importance. Cooperation on counterpiracy efforts thus becomes another important component of US-Indian engagement. There are a number of multinational task forces (from the EU, NATO, and CTF-151) operating near the Horn of Africa and throughout the Indian Ocean, bringing together navies from around the world to address this problem.<sup>94</sup> India is not a participant in CTF-151, but it has demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with other navies to combat piracy, although it retains its own national command to do so. It has consistently helped patrol the western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, escorting ships through the internationally recommended transit corridor (IRTC), and it remains a critical participant in the shared awareness and deconfliction (SHARED) meetings.<sup>95</sup> This cooperation must continue beyond the Horn of Africa and extend to more robust efforts around the eastern reaches of the Indian Ocean and beyond. While the most effective antipiracy measures involve a coordinated sea and land strategy to dampen pirate success while addressing the underlying causes, this effort can help stem the tide and, more importantly, create additional opportunities for the United States and India to pursue joint objectives.<sup>96</sup> This cooperation can extend beyond the purely naval realm as surveillance aircraft and remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) help augment surface ships to monitor vast expanses of the ocean.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, the United States and India can use counterpiracy efforts as a vehicle for greater coordination and cooperation throughout the Indian Ocean region.

## **Assist with Counterterrorism**

Although counterterrorism efforts between the two nations may have little direct application to the Asian balance of power, this remains an important aspect of US-Indian cooperation and provides another shared interest the nations can jointly address. The post-9/11 environments, and more specifically the 2008 Mumbai attacks, have generated an unprecedented acceleration of counterterrorism cooperation between the United States and India. Intelligence sharing, high-level diplomatic conferences and agreements (including the Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism and the 2010 Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative),<sup>98</sup> and joint initiatives to combat terrorist financing, maintain critical infrastructure, and improve policing strategies must continue. This effort must also address the significant shortcomings in Indian police manning, funding, and resources.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, intelligence-sharing efforts will encounter difficulties with India's domestic and foreign intelligence agencies, the Indian Intelligence Bureau (IIB), and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). Some observers have noted significant problems in capacity as well as intelligence sharing between agencies, probably resulting from a political distrust of a strong police and military apparatus.<sup>100</sup> David Malone argues, "The Indian Intelligence Bureau is somewhat more competent than its external intelligence apparatus, the Research and Analysis Wing, but IIB barely knows, most of the time, 10 percent of what is going on within India, much less is it capable of any sort of projecting cooperation."<sup>101</sup> In addition to difficulties with the police and intelligence agencies, two other related issues generate friction between the United States and India regarding counterterrorism—the US relationship with Pakistan and the status of Kashmir.<sup>102</sup> US efforts to retain Pakistani cooperation in Afghanistan and its border region have created a perception in India that the United States may not take a hard enough line on Lashkar-e-Taiba and its alleged ties to Pakistani intelligence for fear of jeopardizing Pakistan's assistance or appearing to side with India over the Kashmir dispute.<sup>103</sup> Although there is a role for the Department of Defense in advancing counterterrorism cooperation, the most significant advances for increasing Indian capacity involve internal resourcing and cultural changes to the Indian intelligence, police, and paramilitary forces. However, the DoD can assist in counterterrorism training and equipment to assist other US agencies (e.g., the FBI) with their current involvement in bolstering Indian counterterrorism.

## Conclusion

Over the coming decades, the United States will need to adjust to new realities evolving from growth of the world's most populous nations. The shift in the global balance of power has tilted toward Asia, recognizing its phenomenal growth as well as unrivaled potential for future economic, military, and diplomatic power. An informed US policy toward Asia demands a closer relationship with the world's largest democracy. This is essential for both countries' interests and forms a crucial pillar of a China-hedging and, if required, China-balancing strategy. The above recommendations represent an initial vector to develop an Indian-American partnership and identify policies to advance its strategic direction. Fundamentally, the United States must understand that this process will not be fast and will be marked by setbacks with possibly few short-term gains, but the general direction is sound and requires a tireless persistence across multiple administrations and a patience that may be uncharacteristic for a typically impatient American public. However, with the proper focus and attention, the United States can develop a conscious policy toward India that develops a strategic partnership and ensures the protection of American interests in the coming decades. **SSQ**

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